



# The Spade & The Hoe

Volume 5 Issue 6

June 2007

## June Meeting

The annual June Garden Walk will take place on Sunday, June 24th. The gardens open and their times are as follows:

1-2pm—Judy & Bill Opegard, 2827 Knollwood Drive

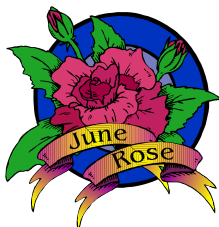
2-3pm—Esther & Dan Behnke, 2981 Landwehr Road

3-4pm—Gloria & Len Tralmer, 2435 Saranac Court. Take Glenview Road to Prairie Lawn, north to Knollwood, east to 2827. Lake to Landwehr, north to 2981. Lake to Landwehr, north to Indian Ridge, west to Saranac Lane, east to Saranac Court, then to 2435. See you all there!

Jackie & Shelly Kimel will host Esther's garden; Jane Prentis will host Gloria's; and Holly will host Judy's. As always, thank you to our hosts!

Each spring...a gardening instinct, sure as the sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground.

- Lewis Gannett



**The May meeting** was the members' plant exchange at the Tralmer's house. I think everyone who came went home with wonderful plants. I know the ones I took were so nice. I potted up 2 pots of herbs that are growing very well.

### Garden Walk Help Needed!

We will again be selling potted plants to our visitors. Therefore, we will need potted plants to sell! PLEASE pot up your excess plants. If you need small 3-4" pots, I have lots of them. Give me a call. BE SURE to identify each pot. And added bonus would be to state if the plant needs shade or sun, is an annual or perennial, needs wet feet or dry. Everyone has excess of their plants that have seeded elsewhere or have made babies next to the parent. We have made good money last year on the plant sale, and that money goes towards fine programs.

He that plants trees loves others besides himself.

- Thomas Fuller

### Wood ashes dusting the ground will control slugs.

Phosphorus is the best fertilizer for perennials in 10-20-10 plus bone meal. Feed the perennials 2 times year, early spring and very late autumn.

Through the Garden Gate It's not like me to start off the column feeling cross, but here it goes. Last fall I potted up a beautiful coleus. During the winter, I carefully rooted cuttings, potted them up, kept them viable and healthy. I had a flat of 28 of those nice growing plants. One nice day in May, I finally planted them outside. Then a plague, in the guise of triplet bunnies, ate them all down in one evening!!!! I think I have 2 left. The others are all gone. All that work! All that beauty! I had never given a thought to crows before, but now I pray that crows return to our neighborhood. To eliminate those g-d rabbits. Not only did they gobble up the coleus, I replaced them with impatiens. Guess what they did to the impatiens??? I am not a violent person by nature, but I am being pushed to the limits of my endurance. They consider Invisible Fence to be salad dressing. They consume Ropel as if it were vitamins. Lord have mercy on me! Remember this when you visit my garden this month. You may see several bare patches and wonder why nothing is growing there. DON'T ASK! I really don't like to be cross.



### Guest Columnist—

#### Len Tralmer

A Day in the Life of a 'Duck Mother'

As I worked in the garden last year, my wife Gloria came walking out from behind our black Hills spruce saying "I bet you don't know what I have with me?" Out she walked with a string of eight 2-day-old ducklings in a line following her. Found out that the 3 neighbor children found them in their garage abandoned by the duck mother. Gloria was called and loaded them into a basket and took them quickly to our neighborhood lake. She hoped to leave them there. Much to her surprise, as she turned around, she found them tagging behind and following her home.

At this point Gloria found a sucker and proceeded to dump them on me. I now had become a 'Duck Mother'. I set them up in a large dog cage with interior paneling to prevent their escape. With the addition of solid roof over the cage, food from a neighbor, a saucer feeding bowl and a saucer swimming pool, I handled the feeding and training. For the 1st day I worked with them on our deck by immersing their food in water and getting the 16" pool ready. Then I started taking them to the neighborhood lake about 300' away in my wading boots. They seemed to like that, but did not get very far from the water's edge. They stayed among the rip-rap and worked on finding bugs and insects. On the 2nd day they saw an airplane heading towards O'Hare and they all looked up while cocking their heads and watched for some time. Then

I faced a weekend departure. What to do with the ducklings? Gloria called around to several sanctuaries to find them a home. I saw a woman cleaning her windows on a home that had lake access. When I asked if she wanted to take care of 8 ducklings, she immediately agreed. I suggested she think it over for awhile and then come over to check them out. Within 20 minutes she arrived with her husband and both agreed to take them off my hands permanently. We gathered up my cage and bowls and transferred them to their care. By the next day the husband had strung up a chicken wire fence in a 30' circle around a shade tree and they lived there for the balance of the summer with daily lake treks before they took off with the wild ducks.

*The gardener's foot does not spoil the garden.*

- Italian Proverb

#### To Make Herbal Bath Sachets

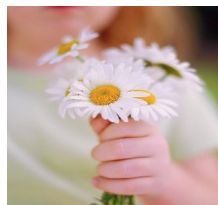
Several minutes before getting into the tub, swish one of these bags around in the hot water to scent it. Then hang the bag from the faucet until the next time. Each sachet is good for several baths. Use unbleached muslin tied with twine.

#### Flower Petal Sachet:

2 tbsp. rose petals  
2 tbsp. dried lavender flowers  
2 tbsp. rolled oats  
2 tbsp. cut orange peel  
2 tbsp. cut lemon peel  
2 dried bay leaves, broken  
2 dried sprigs rosemary, crushed

#### Lemony Bath Sachet:

4 cups dried lemon verbena  
2 cups dried thyme  
1 cup dried peppermint



#### History Lesson 102

Sun-loving basil has been cultivated for at least 4000 years and, through the ages, has had a contradictory reputation. It was native to India where it was a sacred herb, believed to protect against evil. It spread from there to ancient Greece where it became a symbol of hostility and insanity. The French phrase *semper le basilica*, meaning 'to curse', is derived from this. Basil reached Europe by the mid 16th century where it was used both as a strewing herb and as a medicine, and where the oil was used to scent snuff.

There are not around 150 varieties of basil in the world, the oil being obtained from the flowering tops and leaves. In the 17th century, herbalist Jacques Tournefourt was convinced that smelling basil would cause venomous scorpions to breed in a person's brain, and it was viewed askance by physicians for some time.

Despite this, basil and its oil has been used widely as a medicinal herb, primarily for settling an upset stomach, and "to procure a merrie and cheerful heart", which referred to its tonic effects. The oil has a clarifying effect on the mind and aids concentration. It is also useful for soothing skin abrasions. Its properties are a digestive, respiratory, soothing, calming, muscle relaxant, head-clearing, uplifting, clarifying, aphrodisiac, and mentally stimulating. Pregnant women should avoid using a lot of the herb. Plus it make a great pesto and is used heavily in cooking Italian dishes. Its Latin name is *Ocimum basilicum*.



### Toads

A beneficial creature to have in a garden is the toad. Toads are bug-eating machines and one of the few predators that eat slugs. It has been said that in 3 months a single toad will eat up to 10,000 insects and cutworms. They feed at night and hide during the day.

Toad houses can be made from cracked flowerpots turned upside down and sunk into the ground with an inch or so above ground. Break a hole a ground level for an entrance. Toads drink through their skin, so they much have a basin or pond near the garden.

*The love of gardening is a seed that, once sown, never dies.*

- Gertrude Jekyll

### **\*\*NEW COLUMN\*\***

#### **Excess Plants Distribution**

If you have an excess of a particular plant, send me an email with the particulars (your name, name of plant, when members can come over to get some/dig some, etc.) and the information will be included in the next issue of The Spade and The Hoe.

### In June, remember to:

- apply mulch to conserve water;
- plant pumpkins for Halloween;
- pinch shoot tips of annuals and coleus to promote bushier growth;
- plant caladiums;
- stake perennials that tend to flop before they become broken or damaged;
- watch for Japanese beetles and pick them off by hand, dropping them into a can of rubbing alcohol or soapy water;
- stop mosquitoes from breeding by eliminating stagnant water, change the water in the bird bath every other day;
- water the garden with the equivalent of 1" of water per week;
- side-dress eggplants, tomatoes and peppers with fertilizer.

Chicagoland Gardening, May/June 2007

**The sarsaparilla herb rose** to fame in the early 1960s because of a television show called "Sugarfoot". The main character of the program had a habit of ordering a sarsaparilla at the local tavern, and this became a popular soft drink at the time.

When skies are blue and days are bright  
A kitchen-garden's my delight,  
Set round with rows of decent box

And blowsy girls of hollyhocks.

- Katharine Tynan

### What's Blooming Table

Everyone likes to see what their friends are growing. Thanks to Nancy for sharing her moss garden.

### Questions, comments, payment of dues?

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